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# A SERMON

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PREACHED BY THE REV. A. McGILLIVRAY, P. P.,  
IN ST. DUNSTAN'S CATHEDRAL, CHARLOTTE-  
TOWN, ON THE 8TH DECEMBER, 1879, ON THE  
FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

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DEDICATED TO THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD AS A TRIBUTE OF  
TENDER DEVOTION.

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Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.—LUKE 1: 28.

## MY BRETHREN :

HARK ! what a beautiful song comes pealing from heaven as a bright spirit wings his flight through the air to address an humble virgin, praying in her private oratory in Nazareth. As this holy maid is wrapt, in the twilight, in deep meditation, her sweet face is suffused with a heavenly smile, and her soul is ravished with the mysteries of God. A bright cloud dispels the gloom of her cell, as the Angel of the Lord approached her. That wonderful vision bursts upon her eyes like gleams of heavenly glory. The angel, radiant with beauty, addresses her : " Hail ! Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee ! " Some wonderful mystery of God is about being revealed.

After the disobedience of our first parents, darkness covered the face of the fair earth, and the wrath of an angry God seemed to be impending over it. The four thousand years that elapsed between the promise of a Redeemer and

the time of His coming, was a period of gloom to all nations. The untamed passions of men had full sway, and hurled their victims to the commission of the darkest crimes. The poison of sin darkened and seared the consciences of men. Man, having rebelled against his Creator, all evils flowed over the earth. In one word, heaven and earth were at war with each other. To remedy these evils, to bring about peace, and to reconcile heaven and earth, was the end of the Incarnation. When the time intended by God had arrived, Jesus, the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity, became the willing victim on the part of Heaven in this reconciliation. "The humble virgin of Nazareth, the Lily of Israel,"—the "flower blooming in the desert"—the fairest and most beautiful creature upon whom the radiant beams of the sun ever reflected, became the representative on the part of the earth in this "Treaty of Peace."

It requires no display of talents, my friends,—no deep logic, no overflowing genius—to convince even the most obtuse understanding that this exceptional being—excepted from original sin, the common inheritance of man—was peculiarly adorned, peculiarly ennobled and elevated above fallen nature, for her exceedingly sublime and exalted mission. This grand, celestial mission was one in which no less than the honor of God was at stake. It belonged to the native purity, to the supreme excellence, as well as to the infinite dignity of the Eternal Father, that she should be preserved from the least stain of sin from the very moment of her conception, inasmuch as His Adorable Son was to assume His humanity from her untainted flesh and blood! Any other supposition would be casting a reflection of the most serious nature upon the stainless qualities of the Divine Father. This dogma of the "Immaculate Conception" is not founded on our own dreams and fancies. It rests on the firmest foundation, on an unshaken rock, on the real, living language of heaven—on the very original words, telegraphed, as it were, from the eternal throne of God. The Angel Gabriel was delegated from the Holy Trinity to communicate with Mary and to inform her of the heavenly designs in her regard. He came from the New Jerusalem—from the crystal city whose streets are of pale gold, intermingled with

transparent glass—whose walls of jasper-stone are carved with brilliant diamonds, and whose twelve pearly gates creak upon their golden hinges, guarded by flaming Seraphs! He came from the resplendent palace of the King of Majesty, before whose throne the winged angels unceasingly bow in reverential adoration! He came from the bright dome of the heavens where the heart melts tenderly away by the subduing tones issuing from the "Nine Choirs." He came from the unclouded region where the only sun is the beatific vision which illumines the souls inebriated with its ravishing splendors. He came from where all is joy, glory, beauty, magnificence. He came like the flash of the lightning which precedes the peal of the thunder. A moment of time did not pass since He left His refulgent home in the realms of infinitude until He addressed the royal virgin of Nazareth. He was then eminently qualified to judge of true worth, true merit, true celestial dignity. Add to this that His words were dictated by the Holy Trinity. Listen to the manner in which He addressed her whom we consider only a poor creature of the earth like ourselves: "Hail! Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." Such was the glowing strain in which He spoke to her. Yes, the same Lord before whose blazing countenance we, although ministering spirits, hide our diminished heads; the Lord before whose far-seeing gaze the very pillars of heaven tremble; the Lord whose face "no one can see and live"; that same great being—that same eternal God—is with thee; nay, more, you are about to become His mother! When the virgin is amazed at the surpassing grandeur and awe-inspiring nature of the vision, the Angel, whose face shone with a superhuman radiance, continues: "Fear not, Mary, thou hast found grace with God." Inasmuch as to say, although no ordinary mortal would be thus privileged—although the usual grace would not suffice for the accomplishments of the wonders which I proclaim to you as the messenger from heaven—yet faint not, for God has lavished His favors, blessings, and heavenly graces on you, that the plan of the Redemption may be finally completed! Therefore, it is for this reason alone "that thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and thou shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus." (Luke i: 31.) To show you the unsullied innocence and integrity of this spot-



less soul, she would not have accepted the pro-offered honor were it only to soil her vow of virginity. She boldly demands: "How shall this be done: I know not man?" (Luke i: 34.) The Angel again interposes: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore, also, the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i: 35.) Instantly the virgin humbly submits to the decrees of Providence. O! my friends, could our limited minds fully understand the true import of those sacred passages, or could we fully comprehend the illustrious eminence to which she was raised at that moment, we would indeed be awed into silent, breathless admiration at the dazzling magnificence of this miracle. "The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." The power of Him who *was* since the beginning of time; the power of Him whose electric thought flashes from eternity to eternity; the power of him whose invisible presence fills the deep creation; the power of Him who suspends the overspanning firmament in its thrilling grandeur, and calms the roaring ocean in its fury; the power of Him whose angry breath enkindled the devouring, unquenchable flames of hell; the power of Him who could, with one stroke, dash this world into millions of atoms, and hurl it into the abyss of infinite space—this is the eternal, omnipotent power which overshadows the humble virgin of Nazareth. The prophecies of the stars are fulfilled, man is redeemed, elevated—heaven and earth are joined in a never-ending union! A mother, and yet a virgin! Was there ever so great a miracle before? Will there ever be so great again? The Seraphims and Cherubims—nay, the whole celestial court—were literally astounded at this greatest of God's achievements. They left their blessed abode, and sang in the heavens, "Glory to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will!" It was reserved to a poor maiden of humble origin—who was no other than the Queen of Angels in human form—that the Lord, whom the heavens could not contain, should descend to the earth and take up His dwelling place in this cherished temple of holiness. O! who can fathom "the depths of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God."

Born a pure, sinless creature, stopping from one degree of holiness to a still higher eminence, until at last she is lost

to our gaze, wrapt in the snow-white clouds of her own glory. Every event in connection with her wonderful career exemplifies the inherent delicacy of her innate sanctity. Like the morning star, which ushers in the coming day and announces the speedy appearance of the flaming chariot of the sun, she lit the distant hills and rushing rivulets with soft, silvery hues. Like the tinted summer rose, she sweetened the air with an aroma of virtue wherever she went. Like the shining pearl, glittering on the sea-shore, she dispelled the darkness of despair; and like the gate of heaven, she brought hope and sunshine to the bosom of every Christian, because of her was to be born a Redeemer. Shortly after the Word became Incarnate, she went on a visit to her cousin Elizabeth, then bearing the greatest prophet that ever graced the annals of sacred writ. The moment her sweet, penetrating voice is heard, Elizabeth becomes immediately filled with the Holy Ghost, the miraculous child bounds in her womb, and she exclaims, although she knew nothing previously of the Incarnation, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." Whence is this to me—how am I so highly honored, although the mother of a son greater than whom was never born of woman, as that the mother of my Jesus should condescend to visit me? And the Blessed Virgin herself burst forth in a strain of heavenly inspiration, which is to this day the pride of sacred Music and the glory of Catholic hymns! *Magnificat anima mea Dominum!* "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid, for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty has done great things to me." Remember, my friends, that those identical words, without the slightest change, are to be found in every version of the Bible, be it ever so corrupted. Ponder seriously the words, "all generations shall call me blessed." Who are they who call her blessed? Who are they whose greatest delight in this "Vale of Tears" it is to profess themselves her devoted children, frequently addressing her by that most endearing of all terms, "Most Blessed Mother!" They are those within the pale of the Catholic Church! The sects—all the strayed sheep—call her everything and anything but Blessed. To the end of time, the peal of the organ will

soothingly play the hymn which I have quoted, and we ourselves will offer the incense of our praise and gratitude to our gracious Lady. In doing this we are cheered by the exhilarating thought that we are only verifying the prophecy of a prophetess. She who was confidently declared by the Angel to be full of grace; she who was overshadowed by the power of the Most High—the dread, omnipotent power of God; she who, at the very time she uttered her prophetic words, was carrying the Infant Jesus in her virginal womb—could not have spoken falsely merely for self-praise. Why, then, denounce us, and proclaim that our religion is idolatrous for calling her Blessed, when the Angel, coming directly from the unseen splendors of Heaven, called her Blessed; when her cousin Elizabeth, who at the time was inspired with the Holy Ghost, and consequently speaking with the tongue of the Holy Ghost, called her blessed; and when the Virgin herself, speaking, as it were, from the mouth of the Infant Jesus, clearly foretold that all generations would call her Blessed! If we are wrong, the Angel Gabriel lied, the Virgin Mary lied, the Holy Ghost—I shudder even to make the supposition—lied! Are we, then, to be ashamed of a devotion inculcated by the example of such illustrious personages? No! Let it be our pride and our glory—a distinctive mark of the divinity of our religion.

Apart from the fact that the sacred volume teems with proofs in support of our doctrine, the great "Interior Law," written by the finger of the Almighty on the heart of man, is conclusive that devotion to the Blessed Mother is most pleasing to God. We pray to the Virgin Mary that she may intercede for us with her Son, because she was His nearest and dearest friend on earth for the space of the three-and-thirty years that He sojourned among us. We have every proof that He never turned a deaf ear to her petitions. We pay her relative honor—not for what she was in herself—but for what the hand of God made her. The mother of an earthly king receives becoming respect from the subjects of her son. Her pictures are sold and scattered all over the kingdom to be admired and fawned upon by a gaping multitude. Is, then, the memory of the mother of the King of Heaven and earth—of Him who stretched out the brilliant orbs of creation



by a single thought—to be wiped away from our affections as unworthy of our veneration? This would be the blackest of the most slavish ingratitude. Jesus himself is our leading model of a perfect life. He was not ashamed to love and honor His Blessed Mother. From His infancy to His manhood He was subject to her gentle sway, and obeyed her with the submission and devotedness of an only Son. The sweet, endearing name of Mother was always heard on His lips. He showed His affectionate regard for her by proving His divinity and commencing His public life with a miracle, in accordance with her wishes. He changed the water into wine at a mere hint from His mother. Will he not now also listen to her pleading for the pardon of the sinner, when she is so closely and gloriously united to Him. But some individuals, whose ignorance outstrips their prudence, have gone so far as to say that Jesus showed disrespect to His mother on the occasion of the Marriage Feast at Cana of Galilee. This assertion is unworthy of any Christian, and breathes the foulest blasphemy. Did not the blessed Mother, a moment after she told her Son that the wine was out, tell the stewards to do whatever He would command them? Was she not positive that He would not—could not—in the tenderness of His loving heart, refuse her request? Most conclusive of all, did He not actually perform the miracle a few moments after the favor was asked? Do you think that He who came into the world to teach us “the way, the truth and the life,” would teach us to despise our own parents, and thus subvert the social order entirely? Impossible—utterly impossible—and utterly blasphemous. It only shows that certain passages of the Scriptures are cooked—not only on this, but on many other points—to suit the lax and inconsistent notions of some persons of the germ of true Christianity.

But we cannot estimate the singular gifts and lofty holiness of the Blessed Virgin any more than we can comprehend the fathomless perfections of God, which He so liberally bestowed on His lovely daughter. The more we say the more we confess to be unsaid. The cold, lifeless language of earth will not convey a true ideal of her to the human mind. Nay, the mind itself is powerless to grasp at the grand process of her sanctification! She lived and moved

in a higher spiritual atmosphere than we enjoy. Her existence was in a lofty sphere of her own. She inhaled the spiritual air of heaven. We can form some faint conception of her elevation by understanding that God Himself could not honor a mortal being more than He honored her. She was the nearest created being to God. She could not be higher, she could not be more sanctified, unless she became a God herself. This would be impossible. God Himself cannot create another Being like Himself. The moment He commences to create such a being, that Being has a beginning which God has not; he has an origin which God has not; he has imperfections which God has not; and he cannot rule with an unbounded sway, as God can and does! The next thing that God could do to honor a creature, He did it to the Blessed Virgin—He clad a God with her flesh and blood! Let those who laugh at Catholic theology, think, if they can, on what it is to be the mother of an infinite, eternal, omnipotent God; let them think on what it is to have carried that God in her person for the space of nine months; let them look up to heaven and see Jesus shining more brilliantly than the rays of the sun, clad in the luminous body formed from the flesh and blood of the Blessed Virgin—and they will then be able to form some idea of the dignity to which the Mother of God was elevated. This angelic purity, and the sensitive delicacy of her soul, rendered her sufferings in her co-operation in our redemption doubly more unbearable. We are now to consider her bodily and mental labors in connection with the scheme of our salvation. It is those trials that should excite our gratitude and engrave her name upon the tablets of enduring memory. Suffering is the royal way of the Cross. Everyone has to bear his Cross in proportion to his strength. The more eminent and illustrious the saint, the more dreadful and terrible are his interior trials. And as the sanctity of Mary surpassed the sanctity of all the saints together, so did her life-long sufferings exceed the sufferings of all the saints together. The refinement and sublimity of her soul only added force to her overpowering sorrows. I am not going to speak of her interior trials, simply because our minds cannot understand them. Her seven dolors would present ample matter for so many volumes instead of being embraced within the compass of one sermon. Let us briefly



review her bodily labors, in co-operating with the graces and will of God, in bringing about the Redemption. The first instance of bodily fatigue that strikes us forcibly is watching her leaving her native city of Galilee, on a disagreeable winter day, and trudging through muddy roads to Bethlehem of David. She arrives, weak and exhausted, in this latter city, as the grey twilight of a December night sets in. But what kind of a reception meets her within the infamous walls of this cruel city? Although in a condition which should at least call for the charity and sympathy of her sister women, she is despised and driven away from the inns! She in vain travels the cheerless streets for a night's lodging. Frowned at by the gay, indifferent world, shelterless and penniless, the poor, way-worn virgin, attended by her faithful husband, directs her steps to a lonely hut at the foot of a rugged mountain, where a few brutes are protected from the winter blasts. Shivering with the cold, without a spark of fire, hungry, weary, and foot-sore, she here takes up her abode. In this forlorn situation—in this wretched stable, where the only warmth is the breath of an ox, the Holy family determine to spend the night. Truly has it been said, "that the foxes have their dens, but the son of man has not whereon to lay his head." The mantle of darkness covers nature, sleep embraces all creatures, the winter storm rushes by, but the greatest event that ever dawned on the world takes place in this dismal cavern at the hour of midnight, without the refreshment of even a cup of cold water—Mary gives birth to the Saviour of Man! This must have been a night of anxious toil and suffering to our Blessed Lady. But she is only yet on the eve of her martyrdom. The powers of darkness have already risen to crush the reign of her Son. This virgin mother, so young, so holy, sweetly sleeping beside her loving child, is soon awakened and forced to leave her native city reposing in the calm starlight. The knife of the assassin thirsts for the blood of the Infant Jesus! The Angel appears to Joseph in his sleep, and orders him, saying, "Arise, take up the Child and His mother, and fly into Egypt, for it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him." There is no time to be lost. The young mother is immediately informed of the alarming news. Any one can form an idea of the terror that such a murderous intent on

the part of the bloodthirsty Herod was calculated to instil into the heart of the fondest of mothers. The holy couple leave the city in the gloom of midnight to undertake their perilous journey. It would be impossible to describe the dangers to which they were thus exposing themselves. Imagine a frail woman, carrying a little infant, defended only by a venerable patriarch, around whose brow were clustered the blossoms of the grave, who could oppose nothing to Arab spears but prayers and patience. The journey is long, dreary, and lonesome. The burning Arabian Desert had to be crossed, steep mountains to be climbed, dark solitudes to be penetrated, and foaming torrents to be forded. The deep caves of the mountains offer the only resting places to the weary travellers. They suffer every inconvenience to which humanity is subject—languishing weakness, pinching hunger, violent cold, and parching thirst. At length they reach Heliopolis, exhausted in strength, where they remain as exiles from their native land for several years.

Still on the eve of suffering! Her mental trials are beyond the powers of our minds to comprehend. There are strokes of mental anguish, my friends—cruel tortures of the soul—crushing, stunning blows, which are more scathing and terrible in their poisonous darts, and which wound the heart and bleed it even more profusely than death itself. Such were the mortal pangs that rent the bosom of Mary. Although the cords of my heart vibrate in sympathy with those mortal sorrows, my tongue is unable to recount them. Since the day on which the hoary Simeon, standing on the threshold of the Temple, and addressing Mary in a voice broken with anguish, told her that “a sword of grief should pierce her soul,” that sword has been entering deeper and deeper into her heart, cutting and hacking it at every step of her life. Hers was not a sorrow of a few hours or a few days, but a life-long accumulation of unutterable woe. A thousand deaths would she have suffered over and over to prevent the murder of her son; and a thousand times would she have died of grief were it not that she was supported by the hand of God. The filial bond which unites the mother to the son is the strongest and most enduring of earthly ties. Even the brute creation experience this potent

instinct. The lions of the forest, the tigers of the African jungles, defend their offspring with their blood. The mother weeps over the misfortunes of her son, let him be ever so wanting to her in his duty. This is the result of natural affection. But this feeble, flickering passion cannot be compared to the burning, vehement flame of Heaven. God is love. *Deus est charitas*, says St. John. He is the essence of love—love in all its fulness, in all its sublimity, in all its consuming, vivifying fire; and whatever we know of genuine love is only the emanation flowing from the bosom of the divinity. The soul of Mary was on fire with this devouring element! It was inflamed by its contact with the fountain of all love, by the manner in which her soul was rivetted and cemented with the soul of Jesus!

How cruelly bitter and crushing must have been the pangs that darted, like the forked lightning, through her maternal heart, on witnessing the terrible tragedy which closed the career of her Son on earth! The sword of Simeon was then sawing her heart in twain. Nay, the very heart was torn out of her, and strewn, as it were, with gleaming lances! She is an eye-witness in nearly all the dark scenes of the Passion. That fearful *drama* is indelibly written in bloody characters on the mind of Mary. She stands close by, like the coying dove watching her young, when Jesus undergoes his mortal agony in the garden of Olives! She sees him leaving the Supper room with a melancholy look—His countenance pale with terror! She knows interiorly that something is wrong; that the long-dreaded hour has come! She quietly watches Him as He wends His way to a dismal spot at the base of a frowning mountain, whose overhanging woods wail ominously! The night is pitch dark—the sky inky—the air loaded with the breath of Death—unusual silence and awe reign over the deep! Ah! The Saviour falls on His knees; a mortal fear seizes Him; His frame trembles like the leaves on the trees; His eyes close; an icy sweat oozes through every pore, and moistens the ground with freezing drops of blood! He groans out, “My soul is sorrowful even unto death.” Yes, He would be struck dead, there and then, by the vivid picture of coming suffering, were it not that His life was prolonged for actual



torments. This was the crucifixion of His soul, which, in my opinion, surpassed that of the body in its interior violence. Good, loving, Jesus, twice you are sacrificed. Hark! the loud voices of a noisy crowd break the silence of that unnatural hour; the clamorous soldiers approach; the brutal mob rush upon their unoffending victim, like so many fiends let loose from hell; they tear His clothes, they bind His person, they treat Him with every vile contempt, and force Him off, by their sacriligious hands, to be enclosed in a filthy dungeon! On the following morning, the weeping mother is called upon to behold another specie of cruelty exercised on the sacred body of her doomed Son. He who was the God of all Purity, is stripped naked and bound with cords to a stone pillar. A number of the most hardened wretches are commanded to scourge Him. Their arms are strong, the lashes sharp and knotty, and their feelings callous and malicious as the Furies of Darkness! The whips whiz in the air as they come down with stunning, deadly effect, and cut at every blow. The veins split open; the blood spouts and besprinkles the walls; the flesh is torn, and gaping wounds appear; the very bones are laid naked, and Jesus tumbles helplessly against the pillar. The butchers relent, in order to preserve His body for other instruments of infernal cruelty. There is no one now to stanch the blood which flows so freely—no one to wipe the besmeared face. The broken-hearted mother dare not come near. His rough clothes are thrown over His bleeding wounds; and His head, which was the only part left untouched, has now to submit to its own peculiar torture. A crown of thorns, hard as nails, is placed over it, and driven in until it penetrates to the very quick. The veins burst and red streams trickle down the face. A wooden Cross, of huge dimensions, is placed on His torn and lacerated shoulders, until it hews its way to the very bones. In this sad condition He is dragged off to execution. The streets of Jerusalem present a most terrifying scene. The sidewalks are crowded, and the balconies are filled with spectators, straining their eyes to see the frightful procession. Heralds announce the approach of the sorrowful spectacle. The weeping Mother issues from some neighboring house to watch her Son on His last death-march. She rushes distractedly through the shouting, murderous crowd, to catch a glimpse of that

face upon which formerly sat beauty and majesty, but which is now, alas, so pale and disfigured that the practised eye of a mother can hardly recognize it. Jesus notices His lovely mother—lovely even in her crushing sorrow. He extends His hand to her, and they embrace in the midst of that infuriated mob. But the Mother is immediately hurled back by the soldiers, who treat her more like a slave rather than the mother of God. In a few moments she sees Jesus falling heavily to the ground. The God of Heaven is wallowing in the mud, kicked and scourged by vile worms of the earth. O! did His strength give way at the sight of His weeping Mother? O! who can picture such a scene? Silence is the most eloquent language on such an occasion!

Come with me, now, kind friends, to Mount Calvary, on that dismal morning, so terrific in the annals of a dying Saviour. This ill-fated mountain is alive with the motley dregs of the city, which the morbid curiosity of the execution of any criminal always collects. Their noisy uproar echoes in the sylvan caves. They rush to and fro, loudly demanding a victim. The red coats and gleaming bayonets of the soldiers are visible in the distance. The supposed criminal arrives. His clothes, which are now frozen to His wounds, are torn off with such rapidity and violence as to make the skin and flesh cleave to them. The blood flows anew. He is now one gaping wound from head to foot. He is stretched on the hard bed of the Cross. The right hand is nailed to its place, but in order to get the left to the hole intended for it, the murderers stoop down on their knees and drag it, so as to crack and disjoin the bones. His tongue, which the ruffians could not get at in any other way, is burnt with rank gall. His feet are bored with iron spikes. The red-stained Cross is now elevated on high, and there hangs Jesus a bleeding spectacle to the whole world. He hangs on the wounds of His hands and feet, which are continually tearing and opening by the weight of His body. He cannot move His sacred head, as the very marrow is dug out of it by the thorny teeth which pierce it. To crown His dreadful sufferings, His Eternal Father entirely withdraws His sustaining hand, and allows His humanity to undergo the excruciating torments of death. The tone of His voice indicates the ex-

cess of His interior anguish when He cries out, "My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But there is another bleeding bosom—another aching heart, pierced with the whips, thorns and nails that gashed the flesh of the Saviour on that dreary mountain on that direful morning. There stands Mary, a little distance off—the perfect picture of everything that is doleful—of grief inexpressible. No wonder, although she mourns, as no one ever mourned—no wonder, although she weeps as no one ever wept, to see the slain Jesus sacrificed on the Cross. She knows that her presence would, of itself, be enough to cause immense sorrow to her Son. The dull sound of that hammer which drove the nails through the bones, veins and sinews of the hands and feet of the Saviour, tapped—although noiselessly—just as forcibly on the heart of Mary. The flesh which is torn, the blood which flows from the gaping sides of Jesus, is the vital blood which once throbbed in the veins of Mary, as He only suffers as far as His humanity is concerned, which everyone admits to have been formed from the flesh and blood of His Mother. When mute and inanimate nature groaned in sympathy with its expiring Creator, what must have been the darting pangs endured by a fond, loving-hearted mother! A lurid glare covers the horizon, the sun is plucked from the heavens, the rocks split asunder, the ghastly dead walk the streets of Jerusalem, and the earth quakes to its very foundation, proclaiming its eternal abhorrence of the deeds of that fatal day. In the thickness of that unnatural gloom, the Virgin approaches the foot of the Cross. The pale features of the Saviour gleam forth in the surrounding darkness, and the whiteness of death overspreads His countenance. "I THIRST!" rings mournfully on the air, and sounds the death-knell of Jesus. His soul thirsted for sinners, His parched lips for a drop of cold water. Neither will be satisfied. Ah! the eyes of the Son and the Mother meet. O! sad—cruelly sad—moment! He turns a little on His bed of torture, and looks through His blood-bedimmed eyes on His sorrow-stricken Mother. What a deep lesson is contained in this last melancholy gaze! He sees His beloved disciple—who here represents all the faithful—standing near her. He addresses him pitifully: "Son, behold thy mother!"—as much as to say, "Dearest mother, you who have given me



birth ; you who have cradled me in my infancy ; you who have preserved me from the knife of the assassin ; you whose heart is wrung with my passion, we are now to part, at least for a time. O ! who will now take care of thee, who will love thee as I did, who will be a Son to thee as I have been ?" and He commits her to the tender care of St. John, to be henceforth the mother of all the followers of the Cross. My God, my God, whose heart is so recklessly cruel, whose soul so infamously stone-like, as to forget this sad scene of a dying Saviour ? Rent and racked with the most terrific pains, bruised and bleeding in every limb and member, His very flesh torn from His bones, suffering the excruciating pains of death, His last thoughts are upon, and almost His last words are spoken to, His Mother. In a moment of time He will be the Redeemer of the World ; in a moment of time He will be the Conqueror of Death and Hell ; in a moment of time He will be the God of power and immensity. What will He not then do for His beloved Mother, and how gladly will He not grant her every wish.

Christ breathes His last on the Cross. But although He expires by the most painful of deaths, it seems that the Furies of Hell have not yet spent their force—that the infernal malice of His murderers is not yet satiated. His side has to be torn and laid open by a sharp spear, as if they begrudged one drop of blood to His sacred body. The soldiers retire, the mountain becomes silent and gloomy, as the Mother receives the mangled body of her Son into her arms. She nestles that beautiful head—beautiful and divine even in death—on her lap, as if she would preserve it from the vile hands of sinners. The last sad office has now to be performed. The Mother, never wanting in her duty, follows the mournful cortege to the new-made tomb. Here she takes the last sorrowful—painfully sorrowful—look at the remains of Him who had once been so dear to her in life. The shades of night, as if it were commemorative of the Incarnation, darkened the brow of Mount Calvary, as she wended her way slowly home—no, not home—she has no home now—she is a wanderer on earth—her home is where her heart is, in the cold, silent grave of her son. O ! what must have been the feelings of this sorrowing Mother on this dismal night ? Let you mothers who

have seen the portals of the grave close over the form that you loved dearest on earth, form a faint idea of her grief ; but a faint—exceedingly faint—idea it will be.

Although the sun of eternal life had set on the blood-stained heights of Calvary, the "Star of the Sea," like the soft beams of the autumn moon, shed her brilliant rays over the infant Church. Mary came to rule the new-born Church so sacredly placed under her protection by the last will of Jesus. A poor, broken-hearted orphan, she lived an humble, obscure life, with her body on earth and her mind in heaven. Ah ! but the sorrows of Mary, like every other sore affliction—like every other crushing stroke of misfortune in this hard, merciless life—are at last at an end. No more mighty, overpowering sorrow, no more heart-bleeding scenes, no more weeping, good, blessed Lady ! The clouds have cleared, the red-tinted canopy of the heavens is more resplendent at the setting of the sun, and your crown of reward glitters already with its golden gems ! Come with me in thought, kind friends, to the shores of that happy eternity to which we are all hastening. See the royal magnificence there displayed before you. See the greatness and grandeur of this kingly home. This eternal mansion is lit by the luminous glory of God. As far as the sight extends, a crystal sea of untold beauty rivets the eyes, and a wall of unheard-of splendor bounds the view. Legions of the blessed spirits move about, clad in the effulgence of heaven, and bowing lowly before the embossed throne of the Almighty. But who is that brilliant pearl that towers above all the created angels in comeliness of queenly beauty, clad in the snow-white raiment of the lilies, adorned with flowers of every hue, encircled with a golden crown sparkling with twelve blue stars ? That is the gracious Queen of Heaven and Earth, the glorified Mother of Jesus ! Pray to her, then, always and on every occasion ; pray to her in sickness and in health ; pray to her in all your distresses, and you will, most undoubtedly, one day be ravished with her immortal beauty, a blessing which I crave for you all, as well as for myself, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. AMEN.